



# Cnidarians! Jellies of the Oceans

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## The beautiful Mauve Stinger uses its tentacles to paralyze and capture prey!

### Taxonomy:

Domain	Eukarya
Kingdom	Animal
Phylum	Cnidarian
Species	<i>Pelagia noctiluca</i>



### Vocabulary to Know:

- \* **Cnidarian**—(the “c” is silent) phylum of invertebrates including jellyfish, sea anemones, and corals
- \* **Tentacles**—long appendages (a lot like arms and legs) that extend from the body of an organism necessary for movement and feeding
- \* **Mauve**—related to the color purple, violet, or lilac
- \* **Plankton**—microscopic organisms that live in water
- \* **Reproduce**—to make new individuals of the same species
- \* **Herd**—a large number of animals of one kind together

This beautifully delicate jellyfish called the mauve stinger is a member of the Cnidarian phylum (the “c” is silent).

The **mauve** stinger uses eight tentacles covered with red spots (or stinger cells). The mouth of the organism hangs down the center and it contains cells that paralyze organisms caught by the tentacles.

They are not large (about 10 cm in diameter or the size of a clenched fist) but the tentacles can be as large as three meters ( or 9.8 feet)!

These jellies will not be eating you for dinner; they feed mainly on **plankton** and other small jellyfish. A sting from this jellyfish is painful, but lasts only a

short time.

Stingers (and most cnidarians) **reproduce** by sending eggs and sperm into the water where they are fertilized.

The stinger has a wide range and lives in warm tropical waters, the northern Atlantic ocean, the Indian ocean, and the Pacific ocean.

In November of 2007, a “**herd**” of mauve jellies killed off more than 100,000 salmon at a salmon farm in Northern Ireland. The area covered 10 square miles of water; solid with mauve stingers! See the news article from the English newspaper [The Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk).



Not the deadliest jelly in the ocean, but the mauve stinger is beautifully colored!

Image accessed 06/05/2008  
<http://www.glaucus.org.uk/Pelagia-noctiluca-Ca2.jpg>

## So, what should I do if I am stung?

Visit Galveston, and you are likely to find jellyfish.

Most jellyfish stings are a harmless annoyance. Others are deadly. For general stings, you should rinse the area with vinegar (an acid). The acid will help prevent the toxins from the stinging cells from entering the body.

If you do not have vinegar, use sea water or rubbing alcohol. DO NOT use fresh water! DO NOT rub the area, apply ice or hot water either. Make sure that the tentacles are carefully removed from the skin (use tweezers if available). If you can, shave the area with

shaving cream and a razor (to get the last of the stinger cells). Reapply vinegar. You may need to take some pain killers to stop the pain for a few days. See [WebMD](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC145622/)

